

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8244

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE HONG KONG 9462

E.O. 11652:

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJ: EXAMINATION ROW DELAYS UNIVERSITY REOPENING

REF: HONG KONG 8064; HONG KONG 8067

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUMMARY. THE PRE-PARTY CONGRESS ROW OVER UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS HAS APPARENTLY SIMMERED DOWN, BUT MAY HAVE DELAYED THE REOPENING OF SCHOOL. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ROW WHICH FLARED UP PRIOR TO THE TENTH PARTY CONGRESS OVER THE REINTRODUCTION OF UNIVERSITY ENROLLMENT EXAMINATIONS (REFTELS) HAS APPARENTLY SIMMERED DOWN. HOWEVER, THE EVENT HAS LEFT ITS MARK IN AN APPARENTLY DELAYED REOPENING OF SCHOOL--AND EDUCATION POLICY REMAINS A SENSITIVE ISSUE. NCNA SEPTEMBER 19 IMPLIED THAT INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION HAVE REOPENED, WITH A REPORT THAT MORE WORKER-PEASANT-SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN ENROLLED THIS YEAR THAN EVER BEFORE. HOWEVER, NO FIGURE FOR THIS YEAR WAS GIVEN AND NCNA RESTRICTED ITSELF TO SAYING THAT CLOSE TO 200 THOUSAND SUCH STUDENTS WERE ADMITTED FROM 1970 (WHEN UNIVERSITIES BEGAN TO REOPEN AFTER THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION) TO 1972.

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2. NCNA ALLUDED TO THE EXAMINATION ISSUE BY STRESSING THE CRITERIA OF PRACTICAL WORK EXPERIENCE AND RECOMMENDATION BY THE MASSES. EXAMS WERE DOWNPLAYED AS SUPPLEMENTARY CHECKS, APPLIED AFTER THESE OTHER REQUIREMENTS HAD BEEN MET. NCNA ARGUED THAT THIS APPROACH WAS "ENTIRELY DIFFERENT" FROM THE REVISIONIST APPROACH TO EXAMS WHICH PRODUCED "BOOKWORMS." (SHENYANG, WHERE THE EXAM ISSUE WAS RAISED, AND WHERE ATTACKS ON IT CONTINUED UP TO CONGRESS, HAS NOT BEEN HEARD FROM ON THE SUBJECT RECENTLY.)

3. NCNA MENTIONED THE CONTINUED ADMISSION THIS YEAR OF "OLDER" WORKER-PEASANT-REVOLUTIONARY CADRE, ADDING THAT ALL OF THEM HAVE A SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL OF EDUCATION. HOWEVER, THE BULK OF THE NEW STUDENTS ARE PROBABLY NEW-MADE IN THEIR WORKER-PEASANT GUISES. URBAN MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADUATES WITH A STINT IN FACTORIES OR ON FARMS BEHIND THEM VERY LIKELY HAD A BETTER SHOT AT ADMISSION THIS YEAR, AND NCNA SUGGESTS THAT THIS IS THE CASE BY INSISTING THAT THE NEW STUDENTS HAVE "MADE IMPORTANT PROGRESS IN REMOULDING THEIR WORLD OUTLOOK" THROUGH WORK EXPERIENCE BETWEEN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND COLLEGE ADMISSION.

4. RADIO BROADCASTS FROM SHANGHAI, HOPEI, AND KWANGTUNG (SEPTEMBER 17, 14, 15) REPORT THE REOPENING OF UNIVERSITIES THERE. COMPARISON OF THE KWANGTUNG REPORT WITH ITS EQUIVALENT LAST YEAR REVEALS THAT THE REOPENING THERE IS ALMOST A MONTH LATER THIS YEAR AND WE SPECULATE THAT THE EXAM ROW, AND RESULTING CONFUSION OVER ADMISSIONS; CAUSED THE DELAY. WE ALSO NOTE THAT THE NUMBER OF INSTITUTES OPENING IN KWANGTUNG HAS DOUBLED THIS YEAR (18 AGAINST NINE LAST YEAR) AND WE TAKE THIS AS FURTHER CONFIRMATION OF INCREASED ENROLLMENT THIS YEAR GENERALLY. ACCORDING TO THE BROADCAST, TOTAL NEW ENROLLMENT IN KWANGTUNG THIS YEAR IS 7,200.
OSBORN

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